

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 003332

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL:12/18/2012

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATED NIGERIA TRIP WIRES

REF: 01 ABUJA 2508

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR HOWARD F. JETER. REASON: 1.5 (G).

11. (C/NF) Abuja and Lagos EACs met separately to examine and update tripwires last reported reftel. The impetus for these meetings was rising tensions associated with electoral activity in Nigeria and the possibility of U.S. military action in Iraq. This message reports tripwires for both Posts.

12. (C/NF) Background: Nigeria is more volatile today than a year ago. Ethnic and religious passions are evident. A stagnant economy and high unemployment have created large pools of disaffected youth easily persuaded to take to the streets in some cities. Elections into local, state and national office by law should take place in early 2003 but are yet to be scheduled, adding to the underlying tensions. Against this backdrop, eventual U.S. military action in Iraq will resonate along regional and religious fault lines here, already under stress from economic and electoral pressures. Should the U.S. engage militarily in Iraq, significant anti-American protests are possible in several cities, including Abuja and Lagos.

13. (C/NF) Vulnerabilities: While GON security forces retain the same limited capabilities they had a year ago, today they face additional challenges. Violent demonstrations in Abuja November 22 related to the Miss World beauty pageant ended the aura of immunity from political violence that the capital had previously enjoyed. Moreover, other apparently politically-inspired violence, including assassinations, not only degrades citizens' sense of being secure but poses risks for democracy. Should a credible and specific threat to their security arise, the Government of Nigeria would seek to protect American citizens and USG facilities. However, the Mission is less sanguine now than it was a year ago that the GON would be able effectively to provide security. Several Nigerian states face political instability so serious that it may be difficult to hold elections in those states. The GON must seek to preclude any possibility of several, nearly simultaneous outbreaks of widespread, deadly political violence in far-flung parts of Nigeria. Responding to that imperative spreads GON forces out and creates new vulnerabilities in areas thought to be relatively safe.

14. (C/NF) Different Circumstances: Trip wires for Abuja and Lagos are not identical. Overall security conditions and the capacity of the security forces in each city to manage potential security challenges differ. In a nutshell, security conditions and the GON ability to respond are better in Abuja than in Lagos, though swift population growth in the capital has made it less safe than it was previously. A large demonstration around the Embassy in the event of U.S. military action is likely, while the ability of the GON security apparatus in Abuja to respond to such an eventuality is uncertain. The events of November 22 showed a GON unable to respond effectively to very credible threat information. A week later, a massive security presence precluded another violent episode, even though (sources say) the number of those intending to demonstrate was larger. Meanwhile, the security apparatus in Lagos has been traditionally unreliable in the face of serious threats. While the threat posed by the Oodua People's Congress, the largest and most organized group with a sustained history of violence against the federal government of Nigeria and the Nigerian National Police Force, has receded, the ubiquitous, often-violent criminal element in Lagos adds dimensions to the challenges that confront Consulate Lagos in ways that Embassy Abuja does not have to face.

15. (C/NF) Both Abuja and Lagos have taken numerous steps to enhance emergency preparedness, including updating the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), EAP briefings of all official employees and adult family members, as well as similar

briefings for U.S. firms and private American citizens. The Mission also recently conducted a Crisis Management Exercise (CME). Posts have requested and received additional host country security support and have enhanced their security posture significantly at all official buildings and compounds. Additionally, Lagos has taken all necessary steps to ensure that adequate supplies of U.S. dollars are on hand and evacuation orders prepared for all Mission employees and family members. Abuja does not have sufficient USD, but evacuation orders have been prepared; efforts are underway to increase USD cash-on-hand. Classified holdings are in the process of being reduced to one-hour destruction time, and emergency preparedness drills will continue to be conducted at both Posts. Consular officers have visited various cities throughout Nigeria to meet wardens and U.S. citizens on the topic of emergency preparedness. Both Posts have in place special security directives governing travel by employees to areas of particular concern within Nigeria.

16. (C/NF) In consideration of the distinctly different security environments of Abuja and Lagos, the respective EACs have developed Abuja-specific and Lagos-specific tripwires. Chief of Mission reviewed both sets of tripwires December 18 and concurred.

17. (C/NF) One important difference between Abuja and Lagos is the Abuja EAC's determination that "minimal" staffing is not a viable option for the capital. The Embassy does not have a MSG detachment, and its perimeter cannot readily be defended. Should circumstances dictate drawdown below the "essential" level (about 40% of normal staffing, septel), the EAC would recommend Post closure to the COM.

18. (C/NF) Tripwires for Embassy Abuja:

1A. Any of the following trip wires would trigger an EAC and an assessment of the security environment in Nigeria:

- There is a significant upsurge in violent crime in Abuja;
- There are large or violent anti-U.S. demonstrations in any Nigerian city;
- There is scattered unrest in Nigeria as the result of a political event (party convention or caucuses);
- A USG installation anywhere in the world is attacked;
- Threats of a non-specific and unverifiable nature against American lives or property.

1B. Any of the following tripwires would trigger an EAC and consideration of whether to issue a stronger Travel Advisory (recommending that non-essential travel be deferred) and impose further travel restrictions on USG personnel:

- The U.S. commences military operations in the Middle East in support of UNSCR 1441;
- There are large or violent anti-U.S. demonstrations in any Nigerian city with a significant AmCit population;
- There is a more severe disruption in delivery of petroleum products than heretofore experienced;
- There is an effective general strike for any reason;
- Threats of a credible nature to American lives or property emerge anywhere in Nigeria.

1C. Any of the following tripwires would result in convening the EAC and specific consideration of whether to request a travel warning urging that travel to Nigeria be avoided, and to recommend that the COM consider authorized departure:

- There are large or violent anti-U.S. demonstrations in any Nigerian city with American lives or property targeted;
- There are riots or unrest in the Abuja satellite towns and security forces are unable to restore order quickly;
- Inter-ethnic, inter-religious or communal violence breaks out in several parts of the country and security forces require more than two but less than four days to restore order;
- Highly credible threats to American lives or property emerge anywhere in Nigeria;
- Fear and tension in the official American community rise to the point that a significant number of community members request authorized departure.

1D. Any of the following trip wires would result in the convening of an EAC to recommend that the COM consider ordered departure of dependents and of personnel not included on the "essential" list:

- Large anti-American demonstrations in the vicinity of Embassy Abuja or USAID, and security forces are unable to control and disperse the crowds, or violent demonstrators target a USG installation in Abuja and cannot be immediately deterred by police;
- Any USG installation in Nigeria is attacked;
- Inter-ethnic, inter-religious or communal violence breaks out in several parts of the country and security forces are unable to restore order within four days;
- Specific, highly credible threats are made to American lives or property;
- Violent anti-American demonstrations (anywhere in Nigeria) result in major damage to American property.

19. (C/NF) The tripwires for Consulate General Lagos are:

1A. Any of the following tripwires would trigger an EAC and an assessment of the security environment in Lagos and the Southern Nigeria Consular District, as well as a tier-one test of the warden system.

- No clear winners in upcoming elections. Results openly contested. Assassination of prominent person(s).
- Unrest during or after PDP convention.
- Significant major natural or man-made disaster.
- Access to transportation and telecommunications interrupted by strikes of increasing frequency.
- Local and state government services paralyzed at some levels (i.e. police, electricity, fuel and water deliveries).
- Governors request that military assure internal security.

1B. Any of the following tripwires would trigger an EAC to consider recommending a warning to avoid non-essential travel to Nigeria, further restrictions on the movements of USG personnel and their dependents, and possible suspension of visa operations.

- Credible reporting that situation deteriorating quickly. Random sustained violence outside the greater Lagos and surrounding area (the regions just beyond the limits of Lagos, Ikoyi, and Victoria islands, as well as neighboring mainland Lagos areas) increases to the point that the police and security forces have difficulty controlling this violence.
- Instability adversely affects public utilities and provokes severe shortages of some essential items. Replenishment of basic foodstuffs and water increasingly difficult. Unfettered transport of children to the American and British schools no longer assured.
- Rising number of Nigerian elite send relatives on "vacation" outside Nigeria.
- Capital flight increases and oil revenue inflows problematical.
- Political leaders unable to come to grips with situation and show no inclination to compromise.
- Shakeup in military hierarchy. Certain commanders relieved.

1C. Any of the following tripwires would trigger an EAC to consider requesting a warning to avoid all travel to Nigeria, suspension of visa operations, and recommending that the COM consider authorized departure for dependents and persons not on the "essential" list:

- Credible reporting that situation continues to deteriorate. Random violence encroaching on Lagos area; police and other security forces unable to control this violence.
- Instability adversely affecting public utilities; shortages of essential items worsening. Transport to the American and British schools no longer reasonably safe.
- Rising number of Nigerian elite send relatives on "vacation" outside Nigeria.
- Large-scale shakeup in military hierarchy. Commanders of critical formations relieved.

1D. Any of the following tripwires would result in the convening of an EAC to recommend that the COM consider ordered departure of all personnel not on the "essential" list and suspension of all but emergency ACS:

- Substantial and occasionally sustained violence reaches areas close to the Lagos islands and cannot be controlled or such violence cuts off access to the Lagos airport for more

than 24 hours. Police and security forces on the defensive.  
Curfew imposed; military on the streets.  
-- Severe shortages of basic goods and sustained  
interruptions of essential services set in.  
-- Civil disturbances in oil-producing areas endanger  
company operations. Crude oil deliveries sharply reduced.

JETER